

VZCZCXRO3231
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #4680/01 3580320
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 240320Z DEC 06
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8683
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE
RHEHWSR/WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 004680

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/18/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [EAID](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: SULAIMANIYAH GOVERNOR ON REGIONAL ISSUES, PESHMERGA

Classified By: RRT Leader James Yellin for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

This is a Kurdistan Regional Reconstruction Team (RRT) cable.

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In a meeting with RRTOff, the Governor of Sulaimaniyah Province contrasted continued Arab Shia and Sunni fighting with the Kurdistan Region,s stability and unity. The Governor opposed dissolution of the Peshmerga. He noted that due to the efficiency of the Asayish (secret police) in the Kurdistan Region, there are no terrorist groups in Sulaimaniyah province. Issues of concern to the Governor include internal migration to Sulaimaniyah from the rest of Iraq since 2003 and the future of unregistered workers who may burden the local economy. The Governor claims the Coalition assistance to the Kurdistan Region short changes Sulaimaniyah in favor of Erbil. END SUMMARY.

BALANCE OF POWER

¶2. (C) RRTOff met with Dana Ahmad Majeed, Governor of Sulaimaniyah, Jutyar Jaff, Deputy Governor of Sulaimaniyah, Sarkawt Hassan Jalal, Security Director of Sulaimaniyah, and Hewa Jaff, Public and Foreign Relations, in Sulaimaniyah on December 6. The Governor told RRTOff that he predicts the Arab Shia and Sunni in Iraq will remain at war because neither one dominates. If the Kurds ever take a side, he said, they would tip the balance. He observed that in contrast to the Arabs, the Kurdish people are united, despite infighting between the PUK and KDP leadership. However, the leadership of both parties is cooperating to sustain Kurdish unity and stability, he claimed. In contrast, the Governor noted the Iraqi Arabs remain divided on their political future.

¶4. (C) Comment: The present relative peace and stability in the Kurdistan Region notwithstanding, the people and the politicians there still see themselves as having significant competing interests along party and provincial lines. The KDP and the PUK have engaged in armed conflict in the past, and there is no assurance the two parties will cooperate in the future to uphold a unified leadership. End Comment.

PESHMERGA

¶5. (C) A former Peshmerga himself and head of security for PUK, the Governor emphatically told RRTOff: &No one will dissolve the Peshmerga,8 explicitly including Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani. They are an excellent border control force, he added. He said the 100,000 Peshmerga are part of the Iraqi army, and could be deployed to other provinces and even abroad. (Comment: Although the Peshmerga units that have joined the Iraqi Army are always carefully called former Peshmerga,, it was clear the Governor considers

them to remain active Peshmerga. RRT estimates that the loyalty of these Peshmerga remains more to region and party than to the central government.)

ROLE OF ASAYISH

16. (C) Regarding security of the Iranian border, the Governor said the Kurdistan Region secret police (Asayish) has a crucial role in collecting intelligence on both sides of the Kurdistan Region-Iranian border. Kurdish villagers cooperate closely with Asayish to identify mala fide travelers. When queried about the possibility of terrorists, such as Ansar Al-Islam members, crossing the border, the Governor denied there were any active or dormant Ansar Al-Islam cells in Sulaimaniyah. The Governor himself founded the academy dedicated to training the Asayish; its first graduating class of 147 members recently finished a nine-month program.

CONCERNS OVER INTERNAL MIGRATION

17. (C) The Governor said that a recent report on internal migration from the rest of Iraq to Sulaimaniyah showed an influx of 2,227 families. Most were Arab and Kurdish Sunnis from Baghdad. The Governor noted that the report details the family members according to geographical, ethnic, and religious origin; he expressed surprise at seeing three Jewish families in Sulaimaniyah Province. The Governor expressed concerns about support for internally displaced persons who are unemployed, and especially their children. He expressed similar concern about 15,000 unregistered

BAGHDAD 00004680 002.2 OF 002

workers (Arab Iraqis and Arab foreign nationals) who may be placed in a camp in Sulaimaniyah to undergo registration. The provincial government has set up a committee to decide on the specifics of the camp.

CORRUPTION WITH NGOS

17. (C) The Governor supports greater control over non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Sulaimaniyah. He stated, &We have 183 NGOs in Sulaimaniyah and they do nothing.8 He said the previous Governor (Aso Shekh Noory) supported the NGOs, and paid them every three months, even when no activity or progress was made on projects. The Governor contended, &NGOs are part of the corruption.8 He said his office cut funding for most NGOs, but has been supportive of certain initiatives, including for students, the disabled, and the youth. (Comment: Dana Ahmad Majeed,s remarks on corruption in the NGO sector are in part motivated by internal PUK politics. He belongs to PUK,s reform faction that lost to President Talabani,s old guard in the recent PUK elections. Hero Talabani, wife of President Talabani, is a major player in organizing NGO activity in Sulaimaniyah.)

CALL FOR MORE ASSISTANCE

18. (C) The Governor claimed that Coalition assistance favored Erbil to the detriment of the other KRG provinces and said little had been done for Sulaimaniyah regarding infrastructure projects and promoting foreign investment. The Governor complained that Sulaimaniyah local officials were not consulted when the RRT structure was favored in lieu of three separate PRTs for the Kurdistan Region.

19. (C) RRTOff replied the RRT offices are located in Erbil but that its mission spans all three provinces of the

Kurdistan Region. RRTOff added that the RRT encourages U.S. investment in the Kurdistan Region, and that IZDIHAR, a USAID contractor, is compiling a complete list of state owned enterprises in the Kurdistan Region that includes basic company information to inform American investors. RRTOff noted that local entrepreneurs should consider partnerships with U.S. companies as well, although the investment law allows total foreign ownership.

¶10. (C) COMMENT: Irrespective of party politics, KRG officials claim that the Kurdistan Region does not get enough assistance compared to the rest of Iraq. Moreover, the PUK, which controls Sulaimaniyah Province, claims that the KDP-controlled provinces of Erbil and Dahuk get a disproportionate amount of the assistance that goes to Kurdistan.

KHALILZAD